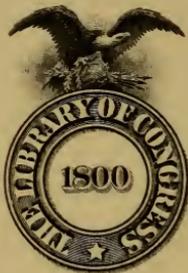


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S E R M O N .



I. SAMUEL XII. 22.

For the Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake : because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people.

THE children of Israel, having long experienced the evils of anarchy and confusion, earnestly requested Samuel to make them a king. Though this request was displeasing to God as well as to Samuel, yet God directed Samuel to anoint Saul to reign over his people. At this critical juncture of public affairs, Nahash the Ammonite came with an army into Judea, and encamped against Jabesh-Gilead. The inhabitants of the city were willing, at first, to capitulate upon reasonable terms; but Nahash insisted on the hard condition, that they should tamely suffer him to pluck out all their right eyes, "and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel." This inhuman proposal the Elders of Jabesh rejected with proper disdain, and demanded a truce for seven days. In that interval, they sent to Saul for immediate assistance, who, in a high tone of authority, commanded

commanded all the fighting men in the kingdom to appear in the field. They readily obeyed the mandate of their new Sovereign, and came with one consent, to the amount of three hundred and thirty thousand. At the head of this numerous host, Saul attacked, and completely destroyed the whole army of the Ammonitès. While this signal victory was spreading joy through all Judea, Samuel invited the tribes of Israel to repair to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. Accordingly we are told, "All the people went to Gilgal, and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal: and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord: and there Saul and all the men of Israel rejoiced greatly." Many individuals, however, felt very differently on that occasion, and especially Samuel, who knew the character of Saul, and was apprized of the evils which the nation would suffer during his unhappy reign. Accordingly he took that favorable opportunity, to resign all his civil offices, which he had long and faithfully discharged; to make some just observations on the late revolution of government; and to remind the people of the great things which God had done for them, and which, he tells them in the text, gave them just ground of hope and confidence in their present critical situation. "The Lord will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people." This was a natural and just way of reasoning.

soning. Samuel had a right to conclude from the perfection of the divine character, that God would, by a wise and consistent course of conduct, eventually answer the ends he proposed, in making the children of Israel his peculiar people. And the same mode of reasoning is still equally just and conclusive. As far as God has been pleased to make any nation his peculiar people, so far that people have reason to expect, that he will not forsake them. Hence the spirit of the text suggests this general observation :

That since God has been pleased to make our nation his peculiar people, he will not forsake us.

In illustrating this subject, it is necessary to consider how God has made us his peculiar people, and what grounds we have to hope, that he will not forsake us.

I. Let us consider how God has made our nation his peculiar people.

Here it may be proper to premise, that God has never taken us into a federal relation to himself, as he did the children of Israel. He made a public and mutual compact with them, in which he avouched them to be his people, and they avouched him to be their God. But though God never entered into such a national covenant with us or with our fathers; yet he has been pleased, in various other ways, to make us his *peculiar* people.

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1. It hath pleased the Lord to separate us in a peculiar manner, from other nations. It was by such a separation, that he made the seed of Abraham his peculiar people. "I am the Lord your God, which have *separated you from other people.*" This circumstance Solomon pleads in their favor, while interceding for them before God, at the dedication of the temple. "*Thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance, as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt.*" And Moses makes use of the same circumstance to enforce their obedience to the divine commands. "Or hath God essayed to go, and *to take him a nation from the midst of another nation*, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?" Here we may discover a very great analogy between our separation, and that of the Israelites. Were they taken from the midst of another nation? so were we. Were they planted in the midst of a barbarous and idolatrous people? so were we. Were they conducted to the place of their destination, by extraordinary interpositions of providence? so were we. Did they become a peculiar people, by their peculiar separation from other nations? so did we. God's taking our fathers from their native country, and
bringing

bringing them a thousand leagues across the mighty ocean to this then dreary wilderness, was practically setting them apart for himself, and making them his peculiar people.

2. It hath pleased the Lord to make us the objects of his peculiar care and protection. Thus he distinguished his ancient chosen people. While he fixed his heart and eye upon them, he spread over them the broad wing of his providence. Of this we have a beautiful description in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy. "The Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them, and there was no strange god with him. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat of the increase of the fields; and he made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock." God displayed the wonders of his goodness to his people, not only while they were in Egypt, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness; but all the while they remained in the land of promise. They were planted in the midst of the nations, and surrounded by enemies far and near. The Egyptians and Chaldeans were their distant enemies, while the residue

residue of the Canaanites remained as pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides. But God graciously guarded them on every hand, by both a visible and invisible providence; and made it appear to the world, that they were his peculiar people. Hence Balaam, who was employed to curse them, was constrained to say, "How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel." Though no proper miracles were wrought in favor of our fathers; yet God afforded them, as he did the Israelites, his peculiar presence and protection. He caused their enemies, at first, to flee before them; and afterwards, when they stood in perishing need of their help, he put it into their hearts to supply their wants. He sent, from time to time, the pestilence and the sword among the Natives, by which they were gradually diminished, and effectually restrained from doing mischief. While, on the other hand, he caused our fathers, who were a few individuals, to spread far and wide, and multiply into a great and powerful people; and at length to become a free and independent nation, notwithstanding all attempts to destroy them. By such a series

series of signal interpositions in our favor, God has visibly owned us, and marked us for himself, in the view of surrounding nations. It must be added,

3. The Lord has been pleased to form us for his peculiar service, by making us, from the beginning, a *religious* people. The Israelites were more eminently the people of God on account of religion, than on any other account; yea, in that respect, they were the only people of God in the world. They were separated from the rest of mankind, for the great purpose of preserving and propagating the true religion, in opposition to the attempts of all other nations, to spread superstition and idolatry over the face of the earth. Hence God told them by the mouth of Moses, "Thou art an *holy people unto the Lord thy God*, and the Lord hath chosen thee *to be a peculiar people unto himself*, above all the nations that are upon the earth." And again he said by Jeremiah, that "he had planted them *a noble vine wholly a right seed*." Their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were eminently holy, and prepared the way for the continuance and prevalence of vital piety among their distant posterity, until they were formed into a religious nation, and furnished with peculiar means of grace. "Behold" says Moses, "I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whether ye go to possess it: Keep therefore and do them: for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the

nations which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people. For what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh them as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for. And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" Thus God formed his ancient peculiar people of religious characters and for a religious purpose. And did he not form our nation of similar characters, and for a similar purpose? Did not our fathers resemble the ancient patriarchs in sincere and fervent piety? Did they not leave their native country, and sacrifice their dearest temporal interests, for the sake of enjoying and promoting real religion in this dark corner of the earth? Did not the spirit and principles of religion govern them in their public as well as private transactions? Did they not make ample provision for maintaining the public worship of God among themselves? Did they not use all the means in their power to civilize and christianize the native savages? Did they not lay broad and permanent foundations for the promotion of religion and the diffusion of christian knowledge to the latest generations? In a word, was not our nation formed for religious purposes, founded on religious principles, and highly distinguished by religious advantages? And in this way did not God visibly set us apart as his own peculiar people?

people? If we trace the uniform conduct of God towards us, from the day our forefathers landed on these inhospitable shores to the present moment, it will appear, that he has done more to raise us up, to preserve and deliver us, to make us holy and happy, and to fit us for his service in building up his kingdom, than he has done for any other nation since the christian era. And notwithstanding our present degeneracy in morals and religion, we even now appear in the eyes of all the world, as God's *peculiar* and *favorite* people. I proceed as proposed,

II. To show what ground we have to hope, that God will not forsake us.

It appears from the preceding observations, that he has done a great deal to form us for himself. He separated the founders of our nation from their friends and from their country. He carried them through the dangers of the sea, and planted them here in a howling wilderness. He protected them amidst savage foes, and guarded them against foreign enemies. He granted them great and peculiar religious advantages. He enlarged their borders, increased their numbers, and caused them to grow up into a large and wealthy people. He carried them through a long and dangerous war, and finally made them a free, separate, independent nation. For almost two centuries, he has been forming and owning us, as his peculiar people. And does not this give us ground to hope, that he will not forsake us? Can we suppose, that he would spend so much time and employ

employ so many means, to make us his peculiar people; without some wise and weighty reasons? And whatever those reasons were, can we suppose, that they will permit him to forsake us, until he has completely answered his purposes. We may safely reason in the language of the text, "The Lord will not forsake us, for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make us his people." Here, then, to give this argument its full force, I would observe,

1. God will not forsake us; because he loved and respected our fathers. His peculiar regard to them was one motive for making us his peculiar people. He selected and distinguished Israel, for the sake of their pious and amiable ancestors. This Moses endeavored to impress upon their minds. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people: for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath he had sworn to *your fathers*, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bond-men, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Again he says, "Only the Lord *had a delight in your fathers to love them*, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day." There is reason to believe, that the Lord loved the fathers of our nation as really, if not so ardently, as he loved the ancient patriarchs. Like them,

them, they felt and acted as pilgrims and strangers on the earth; and, while they sought this country, they more earnestly sought a better, that is, a heavenly. They were men of extraordinary piety and devotion, and made religion their main business. They called upon God in season, and out of season, and presented ten thousand petitions to the throne of divine grace, for their nearest and remotest posterity. As the effectual, fervent prayers of such righteous men, must have been pleasing to God; so they give us ground to hope, that he will long remember our land, and not forsake the children of those, whom he delighted to love.

2. We are encouraged to hope, that God will not forsake us, because he loves the pious posterity of our pious ancestors. God often spared the whole Jewish nation, for the sake of those pious individuals, who remained heartily attached to his cause and interest. Isaiah says, "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Though the body of the nation often fell into great declensions, yet there was always a number of Israelites indeed, who were sincere and zealous friends to religion. These God graciously regarded, and, for their sakes, often averted, or removed desolating judgments. We find several shining characters expressly mentioned, who were powerful and prevailing intercessors for a degenerate people.

people. "Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel among them that call upon his name: they called upon the Lord, and he answered them." If God was pleased to spare his ancient people, for the sake of eminent saints, why will he not spare our guilty nation, for the sake of men of the same excellent character? Notwithstanding our great degeneracy, there are undoubtedly many thousands of sincere friends to God in our land, who are heartily engaged to maintain not only the form, but the power and spirit of religion. These are, at present, the ornaments of our churches and the defence of our country. And as long as a succession of these godly men shall remain, we have reason to hope, that the Lord will spare us from national ruin.

3. We may confidently hope not to be forsaken by God, because he may still answer very important purposes, by preserving and treating us, as his peculiar people. One end may be, to make it appear to the world, that he is able to protect a nation, whom he has set apart for himself, against their most powerful and subtle enemies. His ancient peculiar people were exposed to peculiar opposition. All nations were their enemies, and in their turn attempted to destroy them. Hence his own glory required him to shew himself strong in their behalf, and bear them as on eagle's wings above the united opposition of all their enemies. This Samuel suggests in the text. "The Lord will not forsake his people,

people, *for his great name's sake.*" Moses makes use of the same argument to prevail upon God, not to treat them according to their desert, and entirely cut them off. "Now if thou shalt kill all this people as one man, then the nations which have heard the fame of thee, will speak, saying, *Because the Lord was not able to bring this people into the land which he swore unto them, therefore he hath slain them in the wilderness.*" And Joshua pleads, that God would not, for his own sake, suffer the enemies of Israel to destroy them. "O Lord, what shall I say, when Israel turneth their back before their enemies! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off our name from the earth: *and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?*" The glory of God was deeply concerned to preserve the seed of Abraham, whom he had been pleased to make his people. And since he has been pleased to distinguish us in a similar manner, his own glory is now concerned to protect us amidst the tumults and revolutions of contending nations. He can, and we have reason to hope, he will, display the glory of his great name, in holding us up in the view of the world, as the objects of his peculiar care and protection.

But there is another important end which God may answer, by continuing us his peculiar people; and that is, to maintain *the true religion* in the world,
whilst

whilst it is visibly expiring among all other nations. God was pleased to preserve the Jews two thousand years, for the purpose of maintaining the true religion, amidst the errors and corruptions, which had overspread the world. During that long period of darkness, they were the only people on earth, who retained the true worship of God, and safely preserved the sacred books of divine Inspiration. Had they been destroyed before the Messiah came, the light of divine truth might have been totally extinguished. So, unless it please God to continue us his peculiar people, it seems, that the light of the gospel and the means of religion may be, in a few years, entirely lost. Pagan idolatry and Mahometan superstition have long excluded christianity from Asia and Africa. Atheism, deism, and every species of infidelity are rapidly prevailing in Europe, and involving the most enlightened nations in all the horrors of moral darkness. America, therefore, seems to be the only place, where the Church can live, and religion maintain its ground. Here the laws of the land, as well as the education and habits of the people, are in favor of christianity. Here religious societies and congregations generally enjoy the ordinances of the gospel and the means of grace. Here there seems to be nothing to obstruct the prevalence of religion but the native corruption of the human heart. This God can remove at his pleasure, by pouring out his Spirit upon us, as he did from time

to time upon his ancient peculiar people. We are, in every view, better situated, better qualified, and better disposed than any other nation in the world, to preserve and propagate the pure religion of Christ: This is certainly a very important end to be answered by our preservation. And as long as God can promote his own glory and the interests of his kingdom, by our instrumentality, we may safely conclude he will not give us up to national ruin. Or to use the language of the text, we have good ground to hope, "the Lord will not forsake us, for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make us his people."

Let me now apply this leading sentiment agreeably to the design of the day, and the present state of our religion and government.

1. If God will continue to own us as his peculiar people; then we may confide in his wisdom and goodness, to defeat the designs of those, who attempt to destroy our national peace and prosperity. We are greatly exposed to foes without and to foes within. The European nations are fiercely engaged in war, and seem determined to draw us into their fatal contentions. They have for years been using every political art and intrigue, to undermine our religion and government. And though their designs have been detected and opposed, yet they have succeeded so far as to poison our sentiments, to distract our

councils, to injure our commerce, and to diminish the strength of the nation. These evils, great in themselves, are greatly enhanced, by our present state of doubtful expectation, whether a professed Atheist, or a professed Christian, will be raised to the first seat of our general government. But if the God of our fathers be our God, then we may justly expect, that he will, in due time, dissipate the dark clouds, which are gathering over us, and prevent the ruin, with which we are threatened. He can and will protect his own people against the united opposition of the whole world. He has the hearts, and tongues, and pens of our enemies in his power, and can either mediately or immediately counteract all their malignant effects. He can open our eyes to see the danger of civil and religious delusions, and cause us to pursue our true interests, in opposition to all foreign influence. In such a divine protector we may safely confide. But we have no ground to trust in ourselves, for abundant evidence has been exhibited, in the course of a few years, that we are as liable to imbibe infidelity, and atheism, and to run into anarchy and confusion, as the nations of Europe. If God should forsake us, we should soon be destroyed by others, or destroy ourselves. But yet we have great encouragement to hope, that while he is making a full end of other nations, he will not make a full end of us, because he has been pleased to make us his people.

2. If God will not forsake us; then he will enlarge us, and make us an exceedingly great and flourishing nation. He made his ancient people extremely numerous, rich, and powerful. Agreeably to his promise, he set them at the head of all other nations, who dreaded their power, courted their favor, revered their laws and religion, and were astonished at their superior prosperity and happiness. And if God will not forsake our nation, but only treat us, in time to come, as he has done in times past, we shall soon rise superior to every other kingdom on earth, in numbers, in wealth, in strength, and in every thing that human power and art can effect. If our present enterprizing spirit continues to operate, and the smiles of heaven continue to attend our vigorous exertions, we shall in a very short time have the possession and dominion of this whole western world. It seems to be the design of Providence to diminish other nations, and to increase and strengthen ours. The nations of Europe are destroying one another, by millions, year after year; and, though they may cease hostilities for a season, yet there is no prospect of their establishing permanent peace. Their corrupt sentiments in religion and morals, and their disorganizing principles in politics, will naturally increase their discords and contentions, and gradually prepare them for final ruin. One war after another will probably “gather them to the battle of that great day

day of God Almighty." Hence, there is great reason to believe, that God is about to transfer the empire of the world from Europe to America, where he has planted his peculiar people. And should this be the design of Heaven, we shall undoubtedly continue to spread and increase, until we become the most numerous and powerful nation on earth.

3. If God will not forsake us, but own us, as his peculiar people; then it is to be expected, that he will take effectual care to maintain the cause of religion among us. This will be necessary to promote our prosperity, and to prepare us to answer his chief design, in making us his peculiar people. The cause of religion is now in a languishing state. The number is small, who publicly appear on the Lord's side; and the number is still smaller, who are warmly attached to the interests of his kingdom. The worship of God in public and in private is much neglected. The holy sabbath is openly abused, and boldly profaned. The important doctrines of the gospel are greatly disrelished, disputed, and opposed. Atheism, deism, infidelity, and every species of moral corruption, are pouring in upon us, from every quarter. All these causes are unitedly operating, to extinguish the light of divine truth, and to throw us into more than pagan darkness. But if God means to acknowledge us, as his peculiar people, he will maintain and revive his sinking cause among us. He
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treated his peculiar people of old in this manner. They were often corrupted in their religion and morals, by corrupt and idolatrous nations. But as long as he visibly owned them, he took effectual care to reclaim them, time after time, from their deep declensions. He raised up pious prophets and priests, to warn them of their danger, and instruct them in duty. He raised up pious princes to cut down their groves, and destroy their idols. And he poured out his Spirit, to bring them to the love and practice of the true religion. God is still able to maintain his own cause among his own people. He can raise up rulers, who shall cordially embrace the gospel, and effectually protect our churches in the full enjoyment of all their religious privileges. He can put it into the hearts of ministers to preach the gospel in all its purity and simplicity, and faithfully discharge all the duties of their sacred office. And he can pour out his spirit upon atheists, deists, infidels, and all classes of sinners; and make them the instruments of promoting the cause, which they wish to destroy. These are means, which he has employed, to preserve us from total apostacy. He has raised up many pious rulers and faithful ministers among us, and often poured out his spirit in great abundance. He has lately revived religion in one place and another, and made large additions to some of our churches. And there is reason to believe, that he will continue to
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pour out his Spirit in still larger and larger effusions, until the latter day glory shall commence in this western world. Notwithstanding, therefore, the present triumph of vice and infidelity, we may confidently hope, that our churches will live, increase, and flourish till the end of time. This God will do for us, for his great name's sake.

4. If God intends to own and build us up, as his favorite people; then he has much for us to do, in carrying into execution his gracious designs. This is probably the last peculiar people, which he means to form, and the last great empire which he means to erect, before the kingdoms of this world are absorbed in the kingdom of Christ. And if he intends to bring about these great events, he will undoubtedly make use of human exertions. Though in former ages he employed miracles to effect his purposes; yet he now carries on all his designs, by the instrumentality of second causes. Hence we have no ground to expect to be made a great and happy people, without our own labor and exertions. God employed the seed of Abraham as instruments of raising themselves to that national prosperity and happiness, which he had long before promised the father of the faithful. The children of Israel, after they took possession of the land of promise, were called to great exertions, in order to reach that perfection in religion and

and government, which placed them at the head of the world. It was a work of time and difficulty to conquer their enemies, and to extend their own settlements to the utmost limits, which God had prescribed. It was a work of vast labor and expence, to prepare a place for the seat of their religion and government, and to erect a magnificent Temple for the visible residence of the invisible Deity, whom they acknowledged to be the great object of their supreme affection and homage. And will it not require equal exertions to fulfil the designs of Heaven towards *our* rising nation? The world are in arms, and opposed to our national prosperity and existence. We must, therefore, like the Israelites, fight our way to empire, in opposition to the power, and policy, and disorganizing principles of the most formidable nations on earth. And it is much to be feared, that, while we have wars without, we shall have fightings within, and alternately experience the dreadful calamities of despotism, anarchy, and confusion. There is even a present prospect of perilous times, which will require the friends of virtue, of religion, and of government, to make more vigorous exertions in support of these important objects, than they have yet been called to make. It seems, that piety and patriotism will be put to the severest trials. Christian rulers, christian ministers, and christian professors may soon have occasion to exercise that zeal, and fortitude, and self-denial

denial, which our pious ancestors and the primitive christians displayed. It is to be expected, that bolder attacks will be made upon our civil and religious privileges, by those who are bent upon banishing all religion and government from the earth, whenever they can get more power into their hands. And it is evident, their power is at present increasing; and it will certainly continue to increase, unless the most wise and vigorous measures are pursued to restrain it. God is now loudly proclaiming, that we have much to do to maintain his cause, and promote his designs, in opposition to his, and our enemies.

5. This subject teaches us how we ought to feel and to act, in our present situation. Our feelings and conduct ought to be in conformity with the past and present dispensations of divine providence towards us. It appears from the conduct of God, that he has been pleased to make us his favorite people, and to hold us up to the view of the world, as the objects of his peculiar regard. He loved our fathers, and suffered no weapon nor design formed against them to prosper. He remarkably assisted and succeeded us in our long and distressing struggles for liberty and independence. He has since enabled us to establish and maintain an excellent constitution of government, and to defeat all the attempts, which have been made to involve us in anarchy and confusion.

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While other nations are groaning under all the calamities of war, he allows us to dwell in peace and safety. And while the rights of conscience and the means of public worship are denied to other nations, he permits us to enjoy his Word and Ordinances, without the least compulsion or restraint. These great and distinguishing favors call for our warmest gratitude to our divine Benefactor. We ought to remember, with the most grateful emotions of heart, the years of the right hand of the Most High, and devoutly praise him for the civil and religious, the public and private blessings, which he has so liberally bestowed upon our nation. There is nothing more displeasing to God in his peculiar people, than ingratitude. And if we murmur and repine under all our civil and religious advantages, he may justly upbraid us in this pointed language: "Hear, O heavens: and give ear, O earth: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his masters crib: but my people do not know, they will not consider."

The goodness of God to us his favorite people, demands our confidence as well as our gratitude. Since he has never forsaken us, but always appeared on our side, when men rose up against us, we

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ought to confide in his care and protection, in these perilous times. We may be assured, that he will not give us up to ruin, as long as his own glory requires our existence and prosperity. Though he may try us and chastise us for our deep declensions, yet he will in due time interpose for our relief and deliverance. He seems to have permitted our enemies to push their schemes, and disclose their designs too fast, on purpose to open our eyes to see the destructive nature of their vain philosophy, which threatens the subversion of our laws and religion. And their unhallowed zeal has actually alarmed not only the virtuous part of our nation, but even many who were inclining to the cause of infidelity. Those of this last description begin to believe and acknowledge, that the principles of virtue and piety are essential to our political safety and happiness. It is easy to see, that God may make use of civil and religious delusions, to establish the principles of true religion and good government. And it is our duty, at this day, to place an unshaken confidence in him, to bring light out of darkness, truth out of error, and order out of confusion. Let all ranks and classes of men feel their dependence on God, and place their ultimate dependence on his almighty protection. While all the powers of darkness are
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seeking their ruin. In God there is perfect safety. Our fathers trusted in him, and were delivered. And the pious Psalmist exhorts every class of people to trust in God, with full confidence of his presence and protection, in the midst of national calamities. "O Israel, trust thou in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord: he is their help and their shield. The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us: he will bless the house of Israel, he will bless the house of Aaron. He will bless them that fear the Lord, both small and great. The Lord will increase you more and more, you and your children. Ye are blessed of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

But faith without works is dead. Confidence in God, without proper exertions, is presumption. We shall incur his displeasure, if we hope for his peculiar favor, without acting as his peculiar people. We have no ground to expect, that God will afford us his peculiar assistance, unless we use all the means in our power to defend ourselves. And these we have great encouragement to use. The object to be attained is of vast magnitude, nothing less than the preservation of a nation, destined

tined to be the ornament and admiration of the world, and the seat of virtue, piety, and happiness. Let us, therefore, take courage, and with united ardor and zeal, repel every weapon formed and pointed against us. If we would promote the great ends, for which it hath pleased the Lord to raise us up and set us apart for himself, we must avoid all unnecessary intercourse and connections with those apostate and infidel nations, who are aiming to corrupt and destroy us. We must feel and express a proper detestation of their religious and political delusions. We must guard the rising generation against their vain philosophy and destructive sentiments in morals, religion, and government. We must maintain a warm and persevering attachment to our own excellent religious and political institutions. We must be careful to fill our churches, our legislatures, our courts, and all our public and private schools, with men of sound principles in morals and religion. We must learn to distinguish good government from tyranny on the one hand, and from that liberty which is licentiousness, on the other. We must imbibe the spirit and follow the example of our pious ancestors, who were no less engaged to promote the purity and prosperity of the church, than the safety and happiness of the
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state. Our first and principal exertions are to be made, in support of religion, which is the only basis that can support our free and efficient government; and which is the only thing that can properly denominate us the peculiar people of God.

And while we are sincerely engaged to promote his cause, we may sincerely and fervently pray, that his blessing may attend our exertions. We have always found him a prayer hearing God. For “what nation is there now so great, who has had God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God has been in all things we have called upon him for?” How often did our fathers fast and pray, in the times of their distress? and how often did God hear and answer their requests? How often have their pious posterity imitated their pious example, and have found it not a vain thing, to call upon God? Our late public deliverances have been evidently granted in answer to our public and united fastings and prayers. Let us now, therefore, carry all our own interests in subordination to the interests of Zion, to the throne of divine grace, in the spirit and language of God’s peculiar people. “Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins for thy name’s sake. Wherefore should

should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our fight, by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed. And render unto our neighbors seven fold into their bosom, their reproach wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord. So we the people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations." AMEN.

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